A large, bold, blue letter 'M' is centered within a red square. The 'M' has a slight shadow effect, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

Messenger

Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
in the United Kingdom and Ireland

29 April 2022 • Volume 127 • 4



Adventist identity

Who are we, really?

'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy' (1 Peter 2:9, 10, NIV).

'I will go'

A report of the BUC President's visit to Ukrainian refugees

by Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference

When I first heard the news of the Ukrainian crisis, I was saddened as I would be of any other humanitarian crisis, but returned to the workload on my desk.

A few hours later, I received a call from Pastor Dan Serb, Irish Mission President, who informed me of the conversations that he had been having with Pastor Aurel Neatu, the Romanian Union President. He invited us to come and visit the Romanian border and observe first-hand the crisis and the impact it was having on the church over there.

On 18 March 2022, Dan, Michael Douglas (our photographer and videographer) and I boarded a plane to Romania. Our purpose was to observe the impact of organised humanitarian interventions, give moral support to people during this crisis, and collect stories and experiences of people, including church members, as they go through this heinous humanitarian crisis, and to support the hurting in a practical way where possible. One of our objectives was to best understand how Adventist Community Services at Union level could best provide support for future refugees to the UK.

On Sabbath 19 March, I had the privilege of preaching about a hope and a better future in Speranta (Hope) Church, Bucharest, with Dan as my interpreter, where I witnessed the baptism of three people.

We visited the Romanian border, accompanied by the Romanian ADRA Director, Pastor Robert Georgescu, assessing the needs of the Ukrainian refugees. Pastor Dan translated the stories of heroic deeds from pastors who work tirelessly, physically carrying people from Ukraine to the airport. We heard stories about business owners who use their factories to support the refugees as they make their way to safety.

Pastor Vasyl Vartsaba relayed stories of how the Bukovina Conference in Ukraine opened its campsite to receive refugees. They had 150 people at the campsite, including students and families. The Union then asked them to take another 150 children aged 3-18, some of whom are disabled. One of the many stories relayed to us touched our hearts and helped us to understand the severity of this moment. A group of children were on their way to the campsite, but they were ambushed on the road and were killed. The headteacher felt compelled to take the rest of the children to safety at the Conference campsite, so she drove the bus with 20 children to the site.

The children are so traumatised; they are competing for the attention of their teachers, and their faces are reflecting the despair they are going through, and every now and then they remember that they are safe at the Adventist campsite.

The challenge to the campsite is that they desperately need to develop their infrastructure so they can cope with the numbers.



While I was reflecting on the devastating effects that this moment was having on the lives of the Ukrainians and the Romanians, my mind remembered the awesome humanitarian work taking place in the BUC territory.



ADRA-UK, with its small team, works tirelessly to raise funds for humanitarian crises and secure funding for development projects around the world, including raising over £100,000 for the Ukraine crisis. As Chair of the Board, I am proud of the work of the initiatives that they execute to assist the world's most vulnerable people.

I also salute the work of Adventist Community Services around the Union with thousands of volunteers. A small church contributed £2,000 to the crisis appeal. The small charity E5 Baby Bank, hosted by Clapton Seventh-day Adventist Church, also made significant contributions to support those fleeing their homes in Ukraine.

Outside of crisis situations, many of our congregations run weekly outreach feeding programmes for people living in the UK who are in need. I salute the tremendous work of the local Adventist Community Services teams who commit so much of their time to helping others. I look forward to visiting some of them soon.

I want to thank you for your overwhelming support amid the Ukrainian crisis, and for your constant practical work across the BUC. I applaud the work that you do to go in the name of the Father to help suffering humanity.

The South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is a registered charity and head office of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the South of England.

Being an ordained/commissioned Seventh-day Adventist minister of religion, you are being invited to express an interest to take responsibility for establishing a Chinese congregation and will be required to be able to speak the following languages: Mandarin/Chinese. You will be based in the London Borough of Barnet.

The main duties and responsibilities of the job will include:

- **Planting a vibrant, worshipping community within the Adventist paradigm**
- **Leading worship regularly and on special occasions**
- **Providing religious education for children and adults by preaching and teaching**
- **Officiating at marriages, funerals and other special services**
- **Offering counselling and welfare support to members of the congregation**
- **Recruiting, training and coordinating the work of any local volunteers and lay preachers**
- **Leading and training the congregation in evangelistic outreach**

The successful applicant is required to be a practising Seventh-day Adventist and be an ordained/commissioned Seventh-day Adventist minister of religion.

Other essential criteria are:

- Church-planting experience in the Mandarin/Chinese-speaking communities;
- Understanding cultural paradigms within a Chinese cultural context;
- Ability to give Bible study lessons to non-Christian communities.

This post is a full-time position for a four-year period, and the salary will be **£43,356.00** per annum, which includes London Weighting allowance, a monthly travel budget and an annual equipment allowance.

As an expression of your interest in this position, please email your CV and covering letter to Mrs Jacqui Crawford at: jcrawford@secadventist.org.uk.

Applicants are required to have the right to work in the UK. All necessary checks will be carried out.

The South England Conference is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to data protection and data privacy.

The closing date for applications will be 30 April 2022.





Julian Thompson,
Editor

From the editor . . .

Dear Reader,
This time of the year is a season of reflection. With Easter featuring prominently in the Christian calendar and Communion gracing many of our church liturgies, we are afforded the rarest of opportunities in modern society – the space to pause, and think.

For many of us, this pause comes on a Sabbath when, with grape juice in one hand and bread in the other, we bow our heads and hear a variation of the words, 'For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "... Do this in remembrance of me." ... Examine yourselves' (1 Cor. 11:23, 24, 28, NRSV).

Reflection, even over those aspects of faith familiar to us, is important. You see, as creatures of habit, it can be ever so easy for us to slip into received ways of thinking and patterns of behaviour, forgetting that biblical faith is more than thinking and behaving. It is a dynamism in which there will always be

room for learning, growth, and an ever-deepening experience with the Creator.



Reflection, as exemplified in the ordinance of Communion, helps to prevent relationship from fossilising into ritual.

In this issue of *MESSENGER* we take the opportunity to pause and think about the familiar. In line with this season of reflection, we explore what it means to be Seventh-day Adventist in the context of our society's ongoing crises, and reflect on why Adventism embodies the distinct potential to meet them.

I am pleased to present you with the April edition of *MESSENGER*. I trust that within its pages you will find both challenge and hope, and will come to know more about what God is doing in the British Union.

BUC morning worship – open to all



One of the positive spinoffs from the COVID-19 pandemic is the regular 8.30am BUC morning worship slot, which is broadcast on the *BUC News* and *BUC Youth* Facebook pages. Office staff and guest speakers join by Zoom, but there's a much wider audience on Facebook.

The great thing about this approach is that our Facebook viewers can send in their comments and prayer requests in real time, and we can then respond to them. We have a lot of regular viewers whom we're getting to know quite well, but there's room for many more. Perhaps you would like to be one of them? If so, you will be able to:

- Hear great speakers sharing their topical thoughts for the day;
- Submit your prayer requests and get feedback in real time;
- Get the latest updates on what is happening in the wider church;
- Start your day with God and with your Adventist brothers and sisters from around the BUC;
- Get to know your wider church family and build new relationships with them.

Find us on Facebook at:
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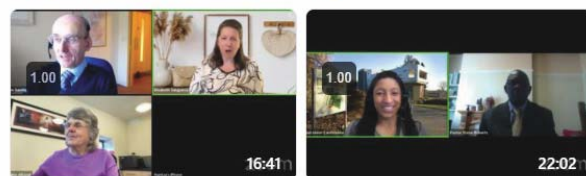
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7



End Time People

Peter's epistles are as much for Christians today as they were for Christians in the first century.

In our third and final excerpt from *End Time People*, Dr Bryan Ball* examines the purpose of Peter's epistles. Could it be that Peter is primarily concerned more about who we are than what we believe?

The NIV translation of 2 Peter 3:11 reads, 'What kind of people ought you to be?' The reply is equally pointed: 'You ought to live holy and godly lives. . . .' That might seem to be a perfectly good answer, succinctly describing End Time people. It appears to be quite adequate. So why don't we leave it there? Because there is another way of looking at both the question and the answer recorded in 2 Peter 3:11.

A question is often asked at the beginning of an article or a book to catch the attention of readers, hoping to engage them in thinking of possible answers. In this instance the question comes at the end of Peter's epistles, and the briefest of answers is given immediately. It would normally take an entire book to answer adequately a question of this magnitude, especially if the writer were not restricted to the letters of Peter, as is the case in this book. Could it be possible, then, that Peter asks the question here, not at the beginning by way of introduction, but at the end by way of conclusion, because he knows that he has already answered it in the previous seven and a half chapters of his epistles? The brief answer given here in verse 11 may be regarded as a succinct summary of everything he has previously said about living in the end time, all leading to the conclusion, 'You ought to live holy and godly lives.' Peter is saying, in effect, 'Read these chapters for yourselves; study them carefully, think about them . . . and you will discover what kind of people End Time people really are.'

In all probability, that is what he would be saying today if he had known he was writing to twenty-first-century Christians as well as to those who lived at the beginning of Christian history. It cannot be overstated that Peter's epistles are as much for Christians today as they were to Christians in the first century. We

should read them with that in mind. We are living in the End Time, just as they were, in the expectation of Christ's soon return, when the great 'Christ Event' of the centuries comes to its final triumphant conclusion. Concerning 1 Peter, Grudem says, 'I do not think that any Christian can study this letter . . . without hearing in it the voice of God speaking powerfully to the needs of today's church.'

Finally, a few words by way of explanation. This book (*End Time People*) is not a traditional word-by-word, chapter-by-chapter commentary on Peter's epistles. It is not a theological exposition based on a detailed understanding of the original Greek, but rather a pastoral commentary in which Peter's concerns for the life of the Church and its members are spelt out. Peter is primarily concerned more about who we are than what we believe. These are letters, not doctrinal treatises, as were some of the other books of the New Testament such as Romans, Galatians or Hebrews, which were written specifically to deal with issues of doctrine or interpretation which had appeared in some places and which required clarification or outright rebuttal. It is true, of course, that 2 Peter 2 does consider this issue; but, even so, it is written from a pastoral perspective, as verse 1 of that chapter makes clear. So the truths that Peter sets out are explained in this book with the aid of appropriate illustrations, personal experiences, relevant quotations, historical events, poetry and the words of well-known hymns, as well as simple explanations of the original Greek words Peter uses. In that respect I have tried to remember – frequently with little success, I fear – Hugh Dunton's classic one-liner on biblical interpretation: 'It is of little value to go down deep if we come up dry.'

For those who would like to delve more deeply into some of the things Peter says, much can be gained from Wayne Grudem's commentary on 1 Peter in the Tyndale New Testament Commentary series and from Michael Green's commentary on 2 Peter in the same series. Edmund Clowney's *The Message of 1 Peter*, in a series edited by John Stott, is also helpful. William Barclay's commentary on Peter's epistles in *The Daily Study Bible* remains as popular as ever, and Lenski's older commentary never fails to bring something new to our attention.

Our approach to Peter's letters, then, will be a thematic approach, picking up what he says about a relevant topic wherever it appears in the text. This means we will move to and fro in the epistles to bring together everything Peter says on any given subject – salvation, obedience, holiness, the new birth, for example – anything he believes adds to the understanding and daily living of End Time people. This may not seem a very good way to approach any part of the Bible, but we remember that these are letters, not treatises. It should also be noted that Peter assumes that some of the things he mentions are so foundational to the Christian message that it is not necessary to go over them again in detail. So he refers to them only once, moving on to his special concerns – satisfied that his readers, all recently converted, are sufficiently grounded in the basic essentials of their new faith.

Peter's epistles, then, were written to express Peter's concern for the life of the Church and to help all believers to live a full and satisfying life in Christ. In the chapters that follow we will attempt to grasp just what that entails, hoping to discover the main essentials of Peter's message to the Church. In doing this, we will not be concerned with some of the details. There will be large chunks of the text that we will pass over in the attempt to capture the big picture, to ascertain Peter's central message. We will discover, I believe, that, in describing what kind of people End Time people should be, Peter answers clearly the 'million-dollar' question. Perhaps the best summary of Peter's purposes comes at the end of the first epistle where he explains why he has written the letter. It is to 'perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you . . . exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand' (1 Peter 5:10, 12). Clowney correctly comments, 'Peter describes the power of that grace in four verbs: God will complete His work in us;



He will establish us, strengthen us and ground us.'

Peter's great burden for all End Time people – then and now – is that, through the working of God within, they will be established in the faith, and that God's work of grace will be completed in them and in the Church. They will understand what living in the End Time really means and what it requires. They will not only assent to Christian teaching, vital as that unquestionably is, but they will also understand and experience the wonderful love of God, ever growing 'in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18). End Time events will be accompanied and adorned by End Time people, ready and waiting for the Lord's return – not necessarily living carbon copies of each other's lives, but all nonetheless characterised by the qualities Peter describes.

Many readers may have heard or read this little poem before, but it will bear repetition since it expresses vividly the journey, the hope and the reward of real End Time people:

*We are near to the end of the journey;
We have come to earth's crisis hour,
When love shall be crowned with glory,
And justice stand up in power;
When the forces of wrong, defeated,
Shall cease with the setting sun;
And the last great page of this mighty age
Sends forth its decree, 'It is done.'
We are near to the end of the journey,
No time now to loiter or wait;
So close to the kingdom of glory,
So nigh to the heavenly gate;
The Daystar divine has arisen,
Though dark was the pathway we trod.
We soon shall abide with the glorified
In the paradise of God.*

End Time people from every age of history and from every nation and culture in the world have experienced the grace of God, have lived in the light of the approaching end, and have looked forward to the final reward of the saints. That's what Peter's epistles will tell us again . . . and they will, I believe, confirm our faith and our hope.


For reflection and further study:

1. Why is 'being ready' more important than knowing the time of the end?
2. How does 2 Peter 3:11 answer this?
3. Do you think there is a difference between 'being ready' and 'getting ready'?

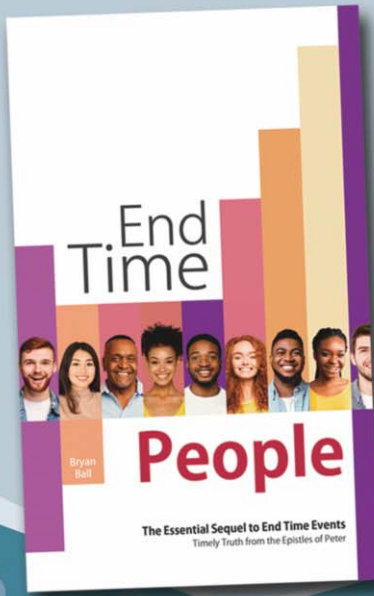
Copies of End Time People are available for purchase from the Stanborough Press for £6.95 + £3.25 (2nd-class) or £4.50 (1st-class) postage and packing.

All Scripture texts are taken from the New King James Version.

**Bryan Ball, an accomplished author and theologian, is a former president of the North England Conference and head of Theology at Newbold College. In the early 1980s he was called to serve as the Principal of Avondale College, Australia, and subsequently as President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific.*



Stanborough Press
Keeping the church family together



End Time People


What do End Time people look like? What do they believe? In whom do they trust? And what is the source of their hope? Dr Bryan Ball, evangelist, author and minister of the Gospel with many decades of experience, answers all these questions and more by taking us on a journey through the letters of the apostle Peter, a church leader dedicated to caring for his flock.

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How central is Christ to Seventh-day Adventism?

by Pilira Zapita



his tabernacle . . .] among us' (EXB), living out *hesed* love within our very human context of time, space and matter. From conception, birth, life, death and resurrection, 'in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form' (Colossians 2:9, NIV). Christ fused the human and the divine; and, in and through Him, God reconciled humanity to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19), bridging the gulf of relationship and community that sin had caused. In Christ, humanity has full access to God; has been brought to fullness; and is indwelt by God through the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:27;

John 14:16-18). There can therefore be no Christian faith without Christ; and, on the whole, Seventh-day Adventism shares the above beliefs about Christ with other Christian denominations. Stuart Townsend's song 'In Christ Alone' encapsulates this shared Christian foundation quite well.

A further dimension of the centrality of Christ to Adventist identity relates to the beliefs that are mostly unique to Adventism. As George Knight states in his book, *A Search for Identity*, Adventism was not born in a vacuum.¹ It inherited beliefs from the theological traditions of its pioneers, and among them were the Restorationists, who believed in a return to the biblical teachings that had been overlooked and dented over the centuries in favour of tradition. One of these called for the upholding of all the Ten Commandments of God (Exodus 20:2-17), as Jesus taught (Matthew 5:17-20) – including the Christian observance of the seventh day of the week as the *Sabbath*. The Sabbath is endorsed as a celebratory memorial of creation and restoration of both horizontal (person-person) and vertical (person-God) relationships, in and through Christ, the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. With Adventism's eschatological positioning, the importance of the Sabbath is highlighted even more, as the church teaches that the Sabbath is the seal of God which will play a part in *end-time events*, when the *great controversy* between Christ and Satan will be drawing to a close on earth. Until then, Christ acts as High Priest and Judge in the *pre-advent investigative judgement*, which started on

22 October 1844, when He moved from the Holy to the Most Holy Place of the *heavenly sanctuary*, in fulfilment of the antitypical Day of Atonement. Adventists believe themselves to be the *remnant* of Revelation 12:17, called with the prophetic mission of preaching the *three angels' messages* of Revelation 14:6-12, to prepare the world for the *universally visible second coming of Jesus*. They believe that one way in which the prophetic gift was given to the church was through the ministry of Ellen G. White.² Christ, and the revelation of God's purposes and love in and through Him, is the thread that ties all these unique doctrines together, including the belief of the *permanent destruction of the wicked* after the millennium, and that they don't spend eternity burning in hell.

In the formative years of Adventism, as its pioneers reeled from the Great Disappointment (the failed prediction that Christ would return in 1844) and sought an answer to it, Knight observes that they almost lost sight of the centrality of Christ as they formed the distinctive theology that established Adventism as a church (see the above paragraph). Knight records how they, in response to the claims of other Christian denominations that Adventism was a sect, again had to answer the question, 'What is Christian in Adventism?' during which time they re-established their focus on Christ for the totality of the Christian experience. Therefore, no doctrine or human being, no matter how important to the Adventist faith, is to be held above Christ.

After many years of deliberation, Adventism included a Trinitarian statement by 1931, which acknowledged our belief in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a unity of three co-eternal Persons. Given that Adventist theology is logocentric (word-centred)³ and Christocentric (Christ-centred), we understand that Christ is the Word made flesh (see John 1:14). Simultaneously, we recognise that it is the Triune God who has first pursued a relationship with the human race, interacting with and participating in the human story, from before creation to after the final restoration of all things. It remains our privilege to reciprocate by pursuing not just knowledge of Christ, in whom 'all the fullness of the Deity lives' (Col. 2:9, NIV), but also a relationship with Him – and, in this way, to experientially participate in the life of the Triune God. As Jesus Himself said, 'Apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing' (John 15:5b, AMPC).

Further study: The books of Ephesians and Colossians, and George Knight, *A Search for Identity*.

¹This book, a highly recommended read for every Adventist, is available to purchase from the Stanborough Press.

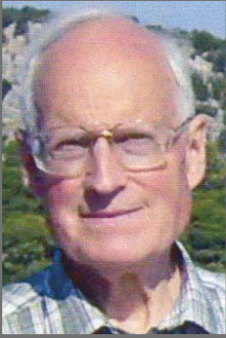
²The church, however, makes it clear that the Bible is 'the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested' – see: <https://www.adventist.org/gift-of-prophecy/>.

³The website containing the official beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church starts with the words, 'Upholding the Protestant conviction of *Sola scriptura* ("Bible only")' – see: <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/>.

Our recent Sabbath School quarterly study on the book of Hebrews has, in essence, summed up the centrality of Christ to the Christian faith as a whole, and in some specific aspects to Adventism as well. It is worth recapping the themes that we explored during the study: Jesus is the promised Son, our faithful Brother, the Giver of rest, the faithful Priest, the Anchor of the soul, the Mediator of the new covenant, the perfect Sacrifice, the One who opens the way through the veil, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and the One who enables us to receive an unshakeable kingdom.

Acts 4:12 tells us that 'there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved' (NRSV). In the beautiful hymn of Philippians 2:5-11, Christ took centre stage after He emptied Himself of His equal status with God and obediently underwent the humiliating experience of death on the cross. As a result, 'God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (verses 9-11, NRSV).

The Christian faith therefore has Christ at its centre, as His condescension was the lived reality of Emmanuel, God with us. This theme of God's desire to dwell among people, which permeates the Scriptures, was actualised when God in Christ, as John 1:14 states, 'moved into the neighbourhood' (MSG, adapted) and 'lived [made his home; pitched



Centred in God

by Pastor Ron Edwards

In ages past, those who observed the motions of the heavenly bodies were bewildered by the apparently

erratic courses of what we now know to be the planets: moving in a particular direction, appearing to pause, then changing direction inexplicably. The facts appeared indisputable, the evidence conclusive: they could not deny what their own eyes told them. Yet the erratic behaviour they saw was only apparent, not actual, from their imperfect apprehension, due to man's eccentric location within the planetary system. Once man realised that the earth was not the centre of the universe, the explanation was simple: we are part of a planetary system, of which the sun is the centre, and all the planets, Earth included, revolve around the sun, which entirely accounts for all the apparently aberrant motions of the planets. The sun is central; we are not. Throughout interminable ages even the wisest had remained in ignorance of this fact. Finally, what previously had been perplexing became completely clear, and without exception or anomaly: it was so simple (truth is always simple).

This means that what appears to be is not always the same as what actually is; appearance and reality do not always coincide. On Planet Earth we cannot see things as they actually are, for ours is an eccentric view. What we perceive as the erratic motion of the heavenly bodies, what appears to us to be, is not what actually is. If we could view things from the location of the sun, which is central in our solar system, things would appear quite differently.

Take also the apparent rising and setting of

the sun, and the apparent orbits of the stars around the earth: so simply explained, but not as they appear to us. Those bodies do not move in relation to the earth; the earth simply rotates. What appears to us is not what actually is. Simplicity is the rule by which God always operates, and He does so with the least necessary expenditure of natural energy. God is not wasteful.

Now, as we live our lives, there may be many things we do not comprehend – indeed, what appears to us may be very different from what actually is – so there is only one way to live successfully: when we recognise and accept that God is at the centre, that God *is* the Centre. Then life can proceed without the complexities of apparent 'aberrations', incomprehensible, capricious events: for we shall know that God is in control, and we shall rest in His loving wisdom. For only God sees things as they actually are: which may be profoundly different from how they appear to us.

Think of Joseph – sold by his brothers (who were envious of their father's favour to him), and on the road to Egypt. But how differently reality turned out in time – God's own best time – years later, tested and true, second only to Pharaoh himself (Gen. 41:43). Those years, patiently endured – in which Joseph had made it his purpose of integrity to fulfil every duty assigned to him with fidelity and care – had been years of training for the highest responsibilities anyone could hold. God had not forsaken him; things had not been as they appeared. Consider Naomi, bereft of her husband and two sons, deciding to return to dwell with God's people in Bethlehem (always a sound decision), and her two daughters-in-law: Orpah, seeing only the present situation, kissed her goodbye; the other, Ruth, vowed never to desert her (Ruth

1:6-17). She could not have anticipated the destiny to which her path of true devotion would lead: to become the great-great-grandmother of Israel's greatest monarch, King David, and also ancestor to the Saviour Himself. What a destiny! But only because she was faithful in circumstances that were not as they appeared. When the youth, David, saw the heathen giant, Goliath, mocking God's people, David saw things as they truly were. 'You come to me with a sword. . . . But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, . . . whom you have defied' (1 Sam. 17:45, NKJV). Daniel was ready to go into the lions' den rather than allow his life of constant prayer to be disrupted. The three faithful Hebrews desired rather to be cast into the fiery furnace than to worship anything but God Himself: 'Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us,' they respectfully told the king: 'But if not, . . . we will not serve thy gods' (Dan. 3:17, 18, KJV). The Son of God Himself accompanied them within that intensely heated furnace; and when they came out there was not even the scent of burning upon their clothes; only their bonds had been consumed.

Innumerable others walked 'by faith, not by sight' (2 Cor. 5:7, KJV). 'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2 Cor. 4:18, KJV).

God is the Centre of all. Is He the Centre of our life? Only if that is so can we be truly 'centred' and God's purpose for our life fulfilled. God has His own way of working things out for our best good, as well as employing those talents with which He has entrusted us in His service. God knows best. Try to see things from His perspective, not from our own 'eccentric' viewpoint. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose' (Romans 8:28, KJV). Do we trust Him when we cannot comprehend our circumstances? Are we true in every test?





Present truth or settled truth?

by Adrian Peck

What is truth?¹ Dismissively asked by Pilate in response to Jesus, it was a question that had vexed Greek philosophers for centuries before this encounter took place, and is very much of concern in the post-truth age in which we live now – an age where emotion and personal belief can readily trump facts.

As Adventists, we have an interesting relationship with ‘the truth’. The truth has been something only we possess, according to some. The truth can be grown into. One can be settled and grounded in the truth, and as a result one can be either in or out of it. Such language has tended towards becoming unfashionable in recent decades, as claims to have the truth come across as arrogant and lacking in nuance.

There is a related phrase that remains in vogue, however: one that suggests a healthier association with truth. This is the very Adventist concept of ‘present truth’. Now, for some, present truth means what the majority of Adventists believed in the early twentieth century, if not before. However, the Adventist understanding of present truth was encapsulated by Ellen White when she wrote, ‘There will be a development of the understanding, for the truth is capable of constant expansion. . . . Our exploration of truth is yet incomplete. We have gathered up only a few rays of light.’² Such a position suggests that critical thinking is embedded deep within Adventist DNA, for critical thinking is more than a method: it involves having a particular mindset or attitude.³

Inquisitive or disinterested

If ‘truth is capable of constant expansion’, inquisitiveness naturally follows. As an Adventist, I have never finished searching the Scriptures, because the answers are never

fully known. Hence, the truth cannot be fully possessed, unless we refrain from declaring of God with the psalmist, ‘How deep are your thoughts.’⁴ For who can fully know the mind of God, in which truth is to be found? As Ellen White writes, ‘No man, however honoured of Heaven, has ever attained to a full understanding of the great plan of redemption, or even to a perfect appreciation of the divine purpose in the work for his own time.’⁵ A thirst for knowledge is what has brought many of us to this church, and it is what keeps us here.

Open-minded or biased

It was drummed into me growing up in Adventism that the Bereans are our role models: those folks from Macedonia who ‘were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica’ and who ‘listened eagerly to Paul’s message’.⁶ We admire their commitment to searching the Scriptures, but this only happened because they were open-minded – adopted a teachable spirit, in other words. It is also telling that Luke highlights their eagerness to listen. At the heart of critical thinking is a willingness to consider and evaluate new ideas and understandings. God requires me to be flexible rather than rigid in my thinking so that I am open to His transforming presence.

Truth-seeking or settling

Although never a Seventh-day Adventist, William Miller has left an indelible mark on our church. Perhaps his greatest asset was his willingness to go against what the majority of people thought at the time. Then the US was gripped by millennial fever in the expectation of a golden age to come with the thousand-year earthly reign of Christ. Miller’s apocalyptic message that Christ was about to

return, with the millennium following in heaven, made him an oddity. Likewise, Adventists have been at the forefront of questioning traditional views of hell, the Sabbath, the heavenly sanctuary, and

so on. Critical thinking requires that I be willing to challenge popular beliefs and societal norms. Our concept of present truth means that, even now, I am to be honest and objective, not supporting preconceived beliefs or opinions without good reason.

Reflective or thoughtless

When Ellen White suggests that no one has a perfect appreciation of the divine purpose, she is endorsed by Paul where he declares, ‘Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!’⁷ Critical thinking has uncertainty (and therefore humility) built into it. It requires me to examine my motives, to reflect on how little I do and don’t know, and to acknowledge that any conclusions I come to are temporary and can be subject to change as new evidence comes to light. I need to be assured of what I believe, but not so inflexible that God cannot work on me. This requires me to be constantly evaluating and analysing myself and the positions I take on subjects. More than this, I am to be willing to leave some beliefs behind, for I ‘have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn’.⁸

Relating or disconnecting

One of the principles that has guided me in my Adventist journey is that the truth is to be found in Jesus, who declared, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’⁹ Truth is not just about ideas, concepts and doctrine. It is about God and people and how I relate to both. Firstly, this promotes the idea that there is a mystery and profundity to truth, because it is found in the Person of the incarnate Christ. Secondly, it helps me to relate to others – but this is where it gets challenging, for it places a demand on me not to judge someone for what they believe or think and so dismiss them as a person if they come up short in my opinion. Openness, humility, uncertainty and a willingness to learn mean that every encounter with another human being is an opportunity to grow. In the same way that I cannot detach myself from my experiences when it comes to my thinking, I also cannot dismiss another’s experience.

‘I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.’¹⁰ Jesus has already answered Pilate’s question before he asks it. Jesus also orientates us in our quest for truth: for without Him, no matter how well thought through, belief is meaningless.

¹John 18:38, KJV

²Ellen G. White to P. T. Magan, 27 July 1903, letter 156 in *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 18

³What follows is partly based on the work of Christopher Dwyer et al. See: Dwyer, C. P. (2017), *Critical Thinking: Conceptual perspectives and practical guidelines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

⁴Psalms 92:5, NLT

⁵Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 343

⁶Acts 17:11, NLT

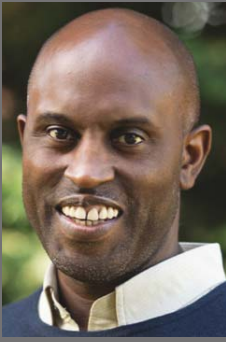
⁷Romans 11:33, NLT

⁸Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 37

⁹John 14:6a, NLT

¹⁰John 18:37, NLT





Adventism in twenty-first-century Europe

Clive Malcolm shares some lessons from when delegates from across the Trans-European Division met in June 2019 to explore the concept of rediscovering Adventist identity and mission in Europe.

In the summer before the pandemic, the Trans-European Division (TED) held its annual Bible conference at Newbold from 16 to 20 June 2019. The three-day event, titled 'Adventism of/for twenty-first-century Europe', comprised plenary sessions featuring keynote speakers Dr Denis Fortin and Dr Wagner Kuhn from Andrews University, USA; Dr Daniel Duda, Education Director at the TED; Dr Artur Stele, General Vice President of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; and Newbold lecturers Dr Tihomir Lazic and Dr Jan Barna. Other presenters, including Dorothea Relic, a Theology student at Newbold, conducted workshops in the afternoons. Pastor Raafat Kamal, President of the TED, got the conference underway with the thought-provoking question: 'Are we still relevant for twenty-first-century Europe?'

'Our church has changed significantly, as the world has changed, since the inception of the movement,' said Dr Tihomir Lazic, lecturer in Theology, during the plenary session. 'The Church in twenty-first-century Europe is different to the Church in nineteenth-century America, so we have to deal with change.' His words were echoed by Dr Daniel Duda during his discourse on Adventist identity: 'We are not going to understand Adventist identity unless we understand the world in which it was born' – which was an era of slavery, mass migration and settlement, the American Civil War and religious awakening. 'Adventism was born out of rethinking,' Dr Duda elaborated; and, he continued, 'New patterns of thinking will always cause a crisis of faith and crisis of identity,' signalling that Adventists should not be afraid to think again; to step outside their comfort zones; to rediscover their identity and mission.

This was an interactive conference in which delegates were encouraged to share their thoughts, to 'think again', to consider 'present truth' not only in terms of Adventist theology, but in terms of the realities of life in today's Europe. In essence, they were being asked how Adventists should respond to an increasingly secular Europe where church attendance is in decline. Equally importantly, how can Adventists connect with millennials, Generation Z (also known as screenagers) and people in their communities, and what can the Church offer to ordinary men and women on the streets of Tallinn, Belgrade, Paris or London?

Dr Lazic raised the question of unity: 'How

can the Church in Europe be united with something that is completely different in Brazil, North America or Africa?' he asked, before describing the Church as a complex community which 'takes a lot of wisdom and frustration to get it together, to make it work like a symphonic orchestra – getting all those instruments, which sound so different, to work together'. He introduced the delegates to the theological concept of *koinonia*, which means having an intimate relationship with God and Christian fellowship with others, and explained how it works to unite humanity with Christ. Summarising, Dr Lazic stated that it is important to have the right doctrine, 'because the right doctrine leads to *koinonia*', which means 'we won't need to sell the Church, nor advertise it, because people will want to be a part of it'.

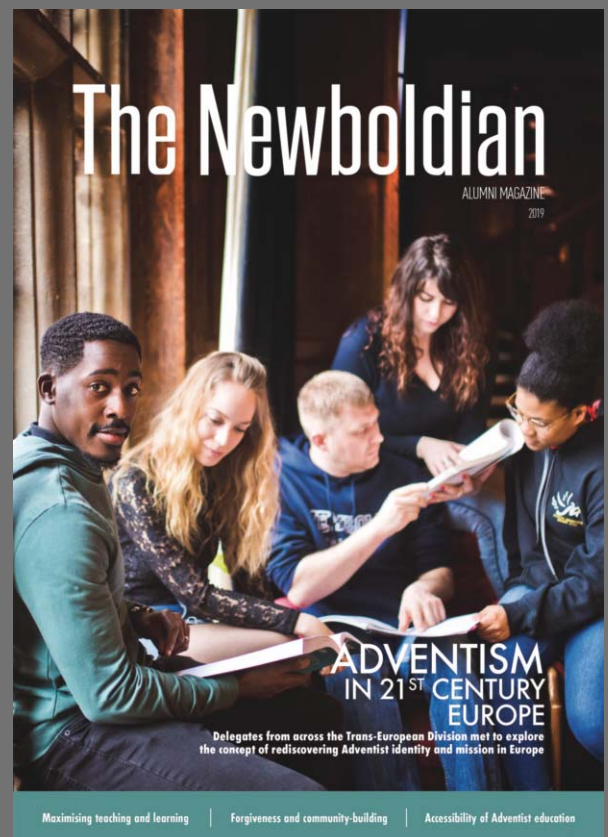
The Bible conference provided an ideal setting for delegates to learn about major issues that have impacted and, in some instances, continue to impact Adventism. Dr Jan Barna, Senior Lecturer in Systematic and Biblical Theology at Newbold, addressed the complex issue of perfectionist theology in Adventism. Unravelling its origins, he showed how Wesleyan perfectionism, a view held by the eighteenth-century Anglican clergyman and theologian John Wesley, was inherited by early Adventism. He spoke about the Keswick Movement of the late 1800s, which promoted the idea of 'holiness by faith' as 'being the act of complete surrender to God's will', which, in theory, allows God to 'suppress the sin within us' to make us perfect. Quoting Philippians 3:12-16 from the Bible, Dr Barna warned, 'Perfectionism not only messes up our theology of salvation and spoils the individual Christian's experience, but it also messes up *koinonia*.' He said that some people misinterpret passages from the Bible and portions of text from Ellen White's writings to validate their position on perfectionism. 'Look into the context first,' Dr Barna advised. 'Read Chapter

47 of Ellen G. White's *Prophets and Kings*. It is the most systematic piece on perfection.'

Quoting Christian author Steve Mansfield, Dr Artur Stele, in his presentation 'The Emerging/Emergent Church Movement: Lessons We Can Learn for Mission', said, 'Young people are voting with their feet. The next generation are not going to church. For the most part, they are going to the First Church of Starbucks.' He continued, 'It's not coffee that attracts young people to Starbucks!' Dr Stele described the challenges of post-modern thinking where people, being less willing to accept God's Word, argue that 'there is no universal truth' and that the '[biblical] text has many meanings'. He also pointed out that postmodern young people are 'against structure' and have become detached from and weary of the Church's department leaders and division presidents. 'We have to find a way to make structure serve people,' said Dr Stele, adding that Adventists need to find ways to present the Gospel 'in such a beautiful way' that people will stop to listen.

This year's Bible conference gave delegates the chance to gain fresh perspectives about Adventism and reignite a sense of urgency in fulfilling the Church's mission to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19, NIV). Pastor Elliott Williams aptly summed up the purpose of the conference as he spoke about his workshop on Ellen G. White: 'Our belief in the Scriptures is a result of faith, and God has provided enough evidence on which we can rest our faith.'

This article first appeared in *The Newboldian* alumni magazine, 2019.





Is Adventism relevant today?

by Pastor Wayne Erasmus, South England Conference Director for Church Growth and Adventist Mission

It's a great question! And, like all great questions, it encourages us to think beyond a knee-jerk response. Our initial response might be, 'Yes! Adventism becomes more relevant the nearer we come to the "end of time".' Recent events have provoked a sense of greater urgency in our faith community, particularly as we notice the increasing pressures within the global economy and political systems. It is an urgency that is reflected, to some degree, in our neighbourhood communities. This response affirms that Adventism is relevant and has something meaningful to say in our time.

Another immediate response might be, 'No! Much of Adventism remains rooted in ways of speaking that belong to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – to Modernist ways of understanding the world, and to forms, methods, and word pictures that are no longer well received in much of the contemporary West, including the United Kingdom. This response is more a challenge to the way in which an otherwise relevant message is conveyed, rather than a challenge to its content. After all, what good is a relevant message if it is conveyed in irrelevant ways?

Relevance relates to 'the degree to which something is related or useful to what is happening or being talked about'.¹ This could be expanded to include dimensions of quality, state of being, and appropriateness. Having something to say without the means or vocabulary to express it reduces its pertinence, aptness, and applicability to the contemporary context. Here our Adventist road diverges between those who claim relevance in principle (like gravity), and those who understand relevance to be more akin to

a relay race in which the baton keeps needing to be passed to different runners. Both are right – but by itself each is wrong. When a message is tied to forms and methods, then it is not timeless and will become irrelevant.

Scripture reflects God as always speaking with humanity in relevant ways. A great example of this comes from the book of Daniel. In chapter 2, God is interacting with Nebuchadnezzar through a dream – the ancients expected the gods to make revelations in this way. The imagery in the dream is that of a statue such as the king would see in his context. The dream is recognisable, both in the imagery and in the form the message takes. Daniel receives the same dream so that he can speak to the king about what was in the original vision. But later (in chapter 7), when God speaks with Daniel about the same theme, the vision contains a creation theme in which animals represent kingdoms. Two different mindsets (worldviews) are accommodated by God through the imagery of the vision. The preacher in Hebrews recognises this reality and expresses the fact that 'God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son'.²

In her efforts to encourage fresh initiatives and approaches, Ellen White encourages 'every worker in the Master's vineyard [to] study, plan, devise methods, to reach the people where they are' so as to 'do something out of the common course of things'.³ In a punchy statement she presses the point: 'New methods must be introduced.'⁴ This passion for contemporary relevance is drawn from the understanding that 'Christ did not follow merely one

method,' but greatly used the imagination to engage hearts and lives.⁵ To this end, not every method or every occasion needs to cover the breadth and depth of truth,⁶ but a variety of timely, apt, and applicable opportunities may be created and engaged that provide a pathway of discipleship to the way and Person of Christ. There will be those whose discipleship journey will be more convoluted than others: nevertheless, a straight line is not the only way to reach a destination.

The relevance of contemporary Adventism must reach across a variety of communities, to those who are within the community of faith and those with whom the message must still find a home. It needs to span multiple generations, worldviews, and cultural expressions and nuances while still conveying the father-heart of God for humanity. This is what Paul expressed as becoming 'all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some', something he does 'for the sake of the gospel' so that it might be a deep, transforming reality in many lives.⁷ Our love and passion for methods should never outweigh our love for the message, for that would be the fastest route to irrelevance – not because Adventism has nothing meaningful to say, but because we fail to articulate meaningful things in a variety of different ways.

Two examples come to mind.

'Seventh-day' references the Sabbath of Creation,⁸ of the 10 Commandments,⁹ and ultimately of the New Earth¹⁰ as a sign between God and humanity.¹¹ More than that, there are blessings to be enjoyed as part its observance. It is legitimate to speak of the Sabbath in terms of prophetic importance, and it is also equally valuable to speak of the relational, health and lifestyle benefits of Sabbath rest. A great example of devising new methods and articulating something as meaningful as the Sabbath in a different way is the 'Sabbath Sofa' initiative.¹² Expressing the significance and real-life value of the Sabbath in a profoundly simple and relationally engaging way invites questions, conversation, and discussion. Opportunities for greater sharing are born that might otherwise not have existed.

'Adventist' connotes the Parousia or



Second Coming, the expectation of which is integral to the birth of this denomination. This belief is not only about a return, but an emphasis on the beautiful truth that God has already shown up in our human story and lived among us in ways that transformed what we believed about God and changed our understanding of how we ought to relate to one another. To live in anticipation of the coming kingdom is to live in the way of that kingdom here and now. And when we take the word 'Adventist' seriously, it makes us aware of the injustices we observe, participate in, and sometimes, to our shame, preserve.¹³ It calls us to admit that we cannot have integrity in calling for dietary ideals while ignoring relational ones, for to be people of the coming kingdom is to be people who honour that kingdom in our present time.

To be 'in the world and not of the world'¹⁴ is not about living anachronistically – as if we exist apart from time, space and context.

Rather, we live 'in' the world, but we do not live 'from' the kingdom of this world. We live 'from' the Kingdom of God, which holds different values and priorities. This is what Jesus is expressing in Matthew 5 and 6. When He says that 'the kingdom of God is among you',¹⁵ He is expressing the emergence of God's kingdom in the midst of the kingdom of this world. Things will be at odds. It will be strange, possibly even weird! But that is only because we keep looking at the Kingdom of God through the lenses of the kingdom of this world. God is not only interested in how we will find our way into eternity, and discover what eternal living will be like. God is also very interested in our lives as we live out the values and priorities of His kingdom despite the prevailing presence of the kingdom of this world.¹⁶ That is where our witness and our relevance lies – in the ongoing, imaginative, diverse, and faithful articulation of the Kingdom of God for our context, for God 'did

not leave Himself without witness'¹⁷ at any time in earth's history. Ours is the privilege to be His witnesses in this time, and in this United Kingdom.

¹<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/relevance>

²Hebrews 1:1, 2, NKJV

³*Evangelism*, p. 122

⁴*Pacific Union Recorder*, 23 October 1902

⁵*Evangelism*, p. 123

⁶'You need not feel that all the truth is to be spoken to unbelievers on any and every occasion. You should plan carefully what to say and what to leave unsaid' (*Evangelism*, p. 125).

⁷1 Corinthians 9:22, 23, NIV

⁸Genesis 2:2

⁹Exodus 20:8-11

¹⁰Isaiah 66:23

¹¹Ezekiel 20:12

¹²<https://thesabbathsofa.org>

¹³'For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light' (Luke 16:8, KJV).

¹⁴See John 17:14-16.

¹⁵Luke 17:21, NRSV

¹⁶John 17:15

¹⁷Acts 14:17, NKJV



Dr Stephen Currow appointed as Newbold's next principal

by Pastor David Neal,

Trans-European Division Communication Director

On 1 April, the Trans-European Division Executive Committee ratified the recommendation from the Newbold College of Higher Education Board of Governors to appoint Dr Stephen J. Currow as the new principal of the college.

Dr Currow has been involved in Seventh-day Adventist higher education for over thirty years, both in the classroom teaching theology, and in academic administration, including posts at Pacific Adventist University, Papua New Guinea (Department of Theology, 1993-1995), Fulton Adventist University College, Fiji (Principal, 2011-2016), and Avondale University, Australia (Deputy Vice Chancellor, 2019-2021). His most recent prior role was to serve for a second time as Newbold's principal lecturer in Pastoral Studies.

'Developing people in ministry is a sacred responsibility,' said Currow on his appointment. 'To train a pastor requires more than the curriculum and includes modelling the values and principles of both Newbold College of Higher Education and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.' Of the many opportunities he sees for Newbold over the next few years, a key priority is to enhance the placement programme – because, as Currow explains, 'We want to ensure that Newbold graduates are work-ready.'

While it is important to Currow that Newbold prepares competent graduates ready for ministry, he also sees future academic programmes creating flexibility to enhance the practical ministry skills of both serving pastors and members.

Born in Australia to a Seventh-day Adventist family, he made his choice for baptism at 11 years of age, 'feeling called to dedicate his life to making an eternal difference'. Entering pastoral/evangelistic ministry after graduating from the then Avondale College in 1981, he and his wife Narisa have been actively involved in church life ever since. With a strong sense of Seventh-day Adventist identity, he is

committed to and understands the future direction of the college as mandated by the governors.

In a message to Newbold staff on his appointment, Currow expressed how he was looking forward to working with them in his new role, and his intent to 'sit with each one and listen to you share about your roles, responsibilities, joys, challenges and suggestions'. He went on further to add, 'Together we will see Newbold continue to contribute to God's mission throughout the Trans-European Division and beyond.'

Pastor Raafat Kamal, President of the Trans-European Division and Chair of the Newbold College Board of Governors, welcomed the appointment: 'I am very much looking forward to working with Dr Currow as he equips the students and supports the staff, strengthening Newbold's ability to partner with members in their mission to share Christ.'

Dr Currow assumes full leadership responsibilities with immediate effect. Dr John Baidam will continue in an advisory role to the new principal, as requested by the college board, during a period of transition ending on Friday 27 May.





Have we given up on evangelism?

Part 3

by Dr Kirk M. Thomas, Evangelism, Missions, Publishing, Personal Ministries & Sabbath School Director of the British Union Conference

Have you given up on evangelism? Do you think it's dead? Is the problem with God, or with me? God wants to give you a passion for souls – will you accept it? These are soul-searching questions that must be answered by those of us who have experienced the love, grace, forgiveness and salvation of Christ.

I daresay that our life depends on the perspective we bring to our understanding of His will for us and the duties He has commissioned us to do. The Bible is clear in John 15:8 (NIV): **'This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.'** Ellen G. White echoes these vital persuasive nudges by positing in *Gospel Workers* (p. 352), 'The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers. . . .' Further, she states in the book *Christian Service* (p. 68), 'The dissemination of the truth of God is not confined to a few ordained ministers.'

The Bible adds substantial weight to this by stating in **Mark 16:15-18 (KJV), 'And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'**

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Mark 16:15-18 (KJV)

devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' The next few verses (19 and 20) capture the enthusiasm for evangelism that the disciples exhibited after Jesus's ascension (NKJV): **'So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.'** This makes my heart rejoice! These brethren grabbed hold of the evangelistic moment and allowed the power of the Holy Spirit to use them in multifaceted witnessing.

Many of us do not know the tremendous potential we have for witnessing for Christ. I will illustrate this by telling you a story I heard. As you read this story, understand the untapped resources we sit with daily.

Yates was a very well-to-do landowner. He had extensive fields. He tried to plant various crops, but was unable to grow good crops. He tried again and again, but failed each time. So, after trying many times, he finally gave up. He became very poor and had to live on welfare from the government. One day someone came to see him and said that he would like to test the soil in his fields. Yates said, 'Yes, you can do anything with my fields.' So the soil was tested and yielded 90,000 barrels of oil in one day! Now, more than thirty years have passed, and his land is still producing 150,000 barrels of oil per day.

Now, here is the sobering question to be asked and answered! Was the oil there when he was poor? Yes, but the problem was that he did not know he had it! The same is true of many of us members! We have the capacity and potential to be fantastic witnesses, but we don't know it! Or maybe we continually ignore the passionate pleading of the Holy Spirit to tell our story of God's saving grace in our lives. We cannot be all evangelists, but we can all be witnesses!

I often ask the sobering question: 'How can someone experience the goodness of God and fail to share those experiences with others?' I am still trying to figure this out. One of my former professors, Jon L. Dybdahl, wrote a book called *Hunger*, in which he suggests that many Christians are around God but do not allow God in them. He further postulated that the enlightenment period has intellectually squeezed God out of the lives of countless people, Christians included. He further posited that even where a theoretical belief in God exists, it has no impact on the daily lives of people. And he believes that this has caused a hunger for God in people's lives, even among Christians.

Dybdahl is on to something here! While we are busy pampering ourselves in our beautiful cathedrals, humanity is seeking to fill that God-shaped void that is in every heart. We read and hear of people searching for spirituality through mediums, gurus, scientology, séances, and many other forms, while movies made for children and adults are dominated with themes that include demons, wizards, vampires, magic, and every imaginable supernatural occurrence. There is a hunger in this world that only Jesus can satisfy, and we know it!

Beloved friends, we have been called by God to be evangelists, disciple makers and witnesses at this time of Earth's history. Speaking of the call of God, I love what Reggie McNeal says in his book, *A Work of Heart*: 'The call is a mystery. It begins and ends with God, but it loops through a very human individual. It is personal, but bigger than the person.'

Are you sensing God's call to action? Have you been an inactive participant of His saving grace? Have you been having God around you, but not in you? Is there a fire, a passion, an urgent desire within you to let someone know that God loves them with an everlasting love? People are seeking God while we are hiding. People are dying while we are playing church. People are desperate while we have disappeared from the lives of our communities. Who will tell them? Who will show the way? Remember the Yates story? The oil of the Holy Spirit is here with us – why be poor? You can be a great witness for Christ: just *GO, BUC!*

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How do I 'do good'?

by Cathy Boldeau

The news media is filled with heart-wrenching stories. The fast-moving

videography depicting the desperation of humanity, the repetitive reports that saturate our screens, and the constant analysis and expected escalation of crisis situations often drive us to 'do good'.

Crushingly sad narratives ignite our motivation. The impetus to effect change is provided by social media posts that 'go viral'. Media fury stirs our emotions to 'do good'.

One such example of this was the Grenfell Tower tragedy, after which was an outpouring of money and clothing to help those who survived the fire . . . but once the cameras left the scene, so did most of the supporters, well-wishers, and 'do-gooders' shortly after.

Humanitarian crises often propel us to donate our funds and contribute our time without reserve. But once the 'hype' dies down, so does our drive to 'do good'. This is what I call **emotional goodness**.

Data, statistics, and research are vital and valid in decision-making processes. They provide us with knowledge and information that was previously unknown,

unrelated at the time, or ignored.

Sometimes we are 'forced' into doing good by the overwhelming evidence of positive contributions to the well-being of others. Sometimes we are mandated by the roles that we undertake or situations or circumstances that make it impossible not to respond.

Sometimes our social corporate responsibility affords us recognition in our workplaces, or there can be financial incentives for corporate organisations.

I call this **rational goodness**.

Doing good doesn't manifest itself as easily as it sounds. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son' is a mantra that we pray, sing, and read about. But – in a world often dictated by interpersonal conflicts, man's inhumanity to man, and war – it appears that, although God loves the world, we who are made in His image find it challenging to demonstrate His love to others through our good deeds.

Our acts of selfishness and self-service over the needs of those suffering around us – often our innate privilege and sense of exceptionalism – manifest themselves in 'good deeds' to be paraded and awarded and celebrated. Our need to be recognised as a 'do-gooder' with all its accolades and applause may inform behaviour.

I call this **fickle goodness**.

Doing good can be hard work. But, as Christians, it is our duty and responsibility to demonstrate justice, compassion and love to everyone by doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

Doing good needs to be consistent, prayerfully approached and humbly executed. Each of us has had the privilege and blessing of a heavenly Father who bestows good gifts on His children. His mercies are new every morning; great is His faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22, 23); and in each act of mercy He tells us, 'Freely you have received, freely give' (Matthew 10:8, NKJV).

Every day, we can 'do good' to others. We can 'do good' to those in our families, to our friends and to those in our neighbourhoods. But we can also contribute to the well-being of others and 'do good' through our financial donations. Doing good is act of God – and, as His children, we can be like Jesus to those we meet by doing good too.

Those you help may not necessarily be grateful. They may resent you for your assistance. You may work long hours with little or no remuneration. You will sacrifice of yourself in doing good. And you should expect nothing in return (Luke 17:7-10).

I call this **sustainable goodness**.

This year, why not join ADRA-UK's 'Do Good' campaign? During 2022, we are encouraging all members to 'Do Good' and help some of the world's most vulnerable people. If you want to know how you can 'Do Good' and get involved, please go to our website: www.adra.org.uk.

Children in need

by Peggy Rusike Edden

'And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me' (Matthew 18:5, KJV).



BBC Children in Need is the British Broadcasting Corporation's UK charity. It raises money for disadvantaged children and young people in the UK. Children who are disabled or have illnesses cycle from places like Wales or Cornwall to London for fundraising. In addition, Comic Relief and Sport Relief are other television charity organisations that raise money for children and others in need in the UK and abroad. The charities have raised millions of pounds since they were started between 1980 and 2002 (www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk).

When I was back home, where I come from, I never thought there would be children in need in the UK. I thought every child had parents who could afford to look after them, whether they were disabled or not, or whether they were sick or fit.

I was wrong.

Children in need are everywhere, even in developed countries, and in our churches all over the world.

It's not only orphans or disabled children who may be in need. Healthy children with both parents can be in need, both emotionally and morally. Yes, some of the children who benefit from money raised from Children in Need and similar charities may also need emotional and moral support. Some children in the world, in the community and in the church are going through a lot of struggles; some are even being abused sexually, physically, and emotionally.

We need to look out for these children. Children's Sabbath School teachers especially have a wider chance of starting a conversation with children and young people in their class and listening. Children who look more withdrawn than their peers may have something going on at home that is eating away at them inside, and a way should be found for the child to open up.

Young people who leave home to study at

universities in our towns and cities come to worship in our churches – they may look like they have it all, but inside they might feel empty. They may be homesick, or overwhelmed by a new place, or struggling to make friends, and we need to be there for them. Our relationship with them should not end at church: let us invite them home for lunch and call them during the week to find out how they are faring.

The children that our children or grandchildren bring home to play with or have sleepovers – whatever they say which is odd needs to be taken seriously. Awkward behaviour should not be brushed aside as nothing. Depending on the behaviour, parents, teachers, and other relevant authorities should be alerted, because the behaviour may be a telling sign that all is not well or a cry for attention.

Some children in need might be our own children or family members. They may seem to have all the things that children and young people want in life, but inside they may be struggling with emotional or sexual issues. They need someone to talk to, someone to listen, a shoulder to cry on, and someone to pray with them and tell them all shall be well.

Above all children's needs – whoever they are, whatever their background – the greatest need in their life is God. We cannot always help financially or give moral support, but we can all pray for the children of the world, and prayer is the most beautiful and precious gift we can give to anyone. As we pray, let us strive to lead those children that are around us to Christ; and in Him all their needs will be fulfilled.

'I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with Him then.'

Jemma Luke, 'I Think When I Read That Sweet Story'
(*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 146)

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Young people baptised at Manchester South

'Teach your children that it is their privilege to receive every day the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let Christ find you His helping hand to carry out His purposes. By prayer you may gain an experience that will make your ministry for your children a perfect success' (Ellen White, *Child Guidance*, p. 69).

Manchester Southern Asia Church was blessed yet again as four young souls – Jaison Paul, Nikita Ayyanki, Melita Kuri and Crystal Kuri – pledged their allegiance to Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour on 12 March 2022 at Manchester South Church. They were baptised by Pastor Ebenezer Daniel. We had the honour of receiving our esteemed NEC officers who attended the occasion, with many visitors from other regions of the UK also blessing the young ones.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Manchester South Church, and to the pastors, elders and the entire diaconate and the AV team from both the churches for their continual support. May we all be co-workers in God's vineyard in gathering souls to His feet.

At this special occasion our church introduced the 'Discipleship Programme', which is to mentor and guide each young soul. Pastor Mike Simpson gave a charge to all the mentors, and blessed all the mentors and the mentees with a special dedicatory prayer.

By the grace and blessings of our mighty Saviour twelve more young souls are considering surrendering their lives to Jesus on 4 June 2022. All glory to God! Please pray for all the young people around the British Union Conference as they learn about Jesus and submit their lives to Him.

SUSHMA MORAPUDI & ASHA KANDANE
CHURCH COMMUNICATION, MANCHESTER SOUTHERN ASIA CHURCH

Welling Children's Takeover Day

The young children of Welling Seventh-day Adventist Church did an amazing job on Takeover Day, taking an active role in worship in front of members and, most importantly, our visitors, many of whom were with us for the first time. Both Pathfinders and non-Pathfinders did an astounding job of praying, preaching and singing. Every child participated in this day. It was a perfect vehicle to showcase how hard the teachers and parents have worked to ensure that the children were all totally engaged and returning to a form of normality after the pandemic. Their attitude was one of determination and positivity.

For Welling it was a memorable day. Many of our visitors and children are post-pandemic visitors who have continued to attend on a regular basis, with their children taking part in children's lessons and activities such as Welling Takeover Day.

They can truly be applauded for their talents and encouraging performance. Very well done!

ELIZABETH PICART, COMMUNICATIONS LEADER



Mother's Day in Swindon

On Mother's Day this year, members of the Portuguese Seventh-day Adventist church in Swindon decided to show people in their community the love of Jesus on a massive scale – by delivering one thousand Mother's Day cards to mothers in the nearby hospital, care homes, and supermarkets, as well as among their friends. Also delivered were 160 cards made by the church's children, which were given out in care homes and at the hospital.

Each of the cards had a web link to a special audio message for mothers, recorded in both Portuguese and English. If you'd like to hear it, please click on the following link: www.7pray.com.

May God bless the efforts of the Swindon Portuguese church and their children in reaching out to their local community with love.

EMERSON FERREIRA





Pattie and pineapple juice evening

For many people, the time period up until this year with the numerous lockdowns has been tough. Not being able to meet up face-to-face has left a good number feeling isolated and out of touch. This has weighed heavily upon our youth. On 29 January 2022, Pastor Herbert invited all the youth to an exclusive 'pattie' and pineapple juice' event at Coventry Central.

The evening began with prayer, after which Pastor Herbert engaged our young people in a couple of curious ice breakers which helped the attendees get to know each other better. The first was 'Find the owner of the shoe'. To play the game, each of the youth had to remove their left shoe and place it in a box. (Some of the youth were very embarrassed to take off their shoes; nonetheless, they all participated.) Once everyone had placed their shoes in the box, Pastor Herbert gave us a few seconds to pick a shoe from the box and find the owner of the shoe. We then had to find out three things about the shoe owner. Even though for many it was a challenge to release our own shoe and take up someone else's, the interaction was fun, and we all shared information about ourselves which definitely drew us closer together.

Mthu Mesako, our games master, led the way in organising many old-school social games, which generated memories and much laughter. Also included in the night's programme were a few moments of gospel karaoke, whereby youth had the opportunity to showcase their voices as they sang gospel songs, which helped emphasise that Jesus gives us a song. Participants were thrilled as they received prizes for their efforts.

The colour scheme of the 'pattie and pineapple juice' event was blue, so it was only right that each person wearing blue showed off their blue outfit to the rest of the youth on a makeshift catwalk. While there were many contestants fighting to win the award for the best-dressed, Takunda won the award for the best blue outfit, which featured a Puma tracksuit, a Puma t-shirt, Puma trainers and even Puma socks. Along with this award, he also secured himself a free paintballing ticket.



Central London's social media baptism

Two precious souls came to Jesus and were baptised on 26 March in Central London Church, and the starting point for both was social media. Does social media have its place in the baptism process? It surely does.

Erliza Berdan Perez, a native of the Philippines, began attending Central London Church towards the end of 2021 after discovering the church through searching on Google. Once she had found our church, Erliza enquired about how she could give her heart to Jesus in baptism.

She was invited to attend the early Sabbath morning study for new and potential members, and came the very next week. Erliza has a live-wire personality and has become a very popular member of the class. She is very eager to share her new-found faith with her family and friends in the Philippines, and as a result she invited six of her friends to witness her baptism.

The second person to be baptised was Jesus Agostinho Evaristo Joao, a native of Angola. He turned up at Central London Church when the church reopened after the first lockdown in 2021, and relayed to everyone that he had found us after seeing one of our live services on Facebook. Jesus was prepared for baptism by Marcos, a fellow Angolan, and took the initiative to begin Bible studies.

Jesus is a faithful believer in Christ, and was eager to learn the Adventist message. He was also invited to attend the early-morning new members' class on Sabbath mornings, and has become a popular member. From his first introduction to CLC (Central London Church) he has been a consistent attendee, and he is enthusiastic when studying the Word of God.

We pray that God will continue to lead people to His truth through social media in all of its forms. We also continue to pray for Erliza and Jesus as they begin their journey in Christ.

COMMUNICATION TEAM

Pastor Herbert also took time to speak to the youth, encouraging them to hold on to Jesus Christ, and if they have not given their lives to Him, now is the time. He then offered a prayer over them.

What also made the night unforgettable were the refreshments served up by Pastor Herbert and Ann-Marie, his wife. The refreshments consisted of patties, pineapple juice and some other finger-licking delicacies. The food received a 5-star rating!

Before concluding the night with prayer, all the youth were given an opportunity to give a 45-second speech about how they found the event.

This event brought people together from Henley Green, Coventry North and Coventry Central. All who attended enjoyed the night, and, more importantly, all were glad to have been able to come back together after the separation since the first lockdown. This event's impact was so wide-reaching that many of the adults and parents in our church have been speaking about it with joy – and they were not even there!

VIMBAI MARIMANZI

Adventurers and Pathfinders ‘evangeliving’ for Christ in Doncaster

Pathfinder induction ceremonies are carefully scripted services in all aspects. However, this year’s induction service held by the Doncaster Pathfinder club on Sabbath 22 January 2022 was a departure from the norm. Firstly, it was held in the midst of social restrictions as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic, which meant the service had to take place as part of the divine hour worship. Secondly, the service was graced by the attendance of three local councillors: Jane Nightingale, James Church and Charlie Hogarth, who serve the Bentley Ward of Doncaster, a community in the catchment area served by the church.

The induction marks the beginning of the curriculum year for old and new Adventurer and Pathfinder inductees alike. Pastor Kirk Thomas, Director of Evangelism, Missions, Publishing, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries at the British Union Conference, was the guest speaker. In his sermon he challenged the young people to use the 4 Ps of ‘evangeliving’ in their lives – namely, persistence, passion, purpose and perspective. He drew on the life example of an Olympic athlete who, through persistent training in his or her chosen sport, cultivates a passion for that sport which directly links to a purposeful life. Ultimately, the athlete has a perspective that drives his/her career goals. In using this formula, young people can make a real difference to the future of their generation in their communities. Pastor Thomas urged and invited the young people to become change-makers in Doncaster through evangeliving for Christ.

Be the voice of young people in Doncaster

Hope is a very rare commodity in our world, especially during these tumultuous times when we have all had to face the challenges of the pandemic. However, in evangeliving for Christ, the young people have the opportunity to offer to their communities a message of hope that is found and rooted only in Jesus Christ. Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs are church-centred spiritual-recreational-activity programmes designed for young people aged 3 to 9 years old (Adventurers) and 10 to 15 years old (Pathfinders). Any young people who are interested in changing their lives and the lives of other young people for the better are welcome to join the club. Children are encouraged to value and take care of themselves, their families and their environment. From climate change to the mental health of young people, the club ensures that the

issues that matter most to the young people of today are on the agenda locally. Doncaster Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs have earmarked this year, 2022, as the year of change for their young people. Instead of an inward-looking club, their emphasis will be on outward-reaching ministry, involving the club in local community projects. This is why it was fitting to have the three local councillors of the Bentley Ward in Doncaster as special guests.

A light in the community we serve

In her address to the club on behalf of the councillors, Jane Nightingale commended the club for being a light in the community and challenged the club to work with the local authorities in reaching the community of Bentley. The councillors shared details of other community-oriented grants from the local council from which the club could benefit, aimed at improving people’s lives in the communities, especially those from marginalised parts of society.

An exciting time to get involved in Pathfinders in 2022

The new club director, Dr Mandela Thyoka, said: ‘I am really excited to be the new leader of the Adventurer and Pathfinder club, and I look forward to welcoming young people interested in joining us on this journey. It’s a great time to get involved. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone who wants to get involved in improving the lives of young people in Doncaster.’

A record total of 35 inductees have joined the Little Lambs, Early Birds, and other Adventurer and Pathfinder classes this year. The club has embarked on a hybrid curriculum, combining face-to-face and online meetings, in order to be future-proofed against any social restrictions from the pandemic. In this year of the unprecedented anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen – who has become the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the realms and the Commonwealth – Doncaster town has submitted a bid for city status. If successful, Doncaster promises to be a vibrant place where the young people can start to practise evangeliving for Christ 100%. For more information on Doncaster’s Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs, visit us on our website: <https://www.pathfinderskonekt.org/> or our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Doncaster-Pathfinders-and-Adventurers-Club-104012968763223>.

DONCASTER PATHFINDER CLUB

¹‘Evangeliving’ is a portmanteau of ‘evangelising’ and ‘living’ that expresses the concept that our everyday life should be evangelistic by its very nature.





Creative witnessing at The Watering Hole

As part of the SEC vision of building communities, half-term was a busy time for The Watering Hole church plant in Hampshire. Nine activities were organised throughout the week with the aim of building stronger



relationships within existing communities and developing new opportunities for connecting with the community.

The card-making group, a ministry that encourages crafting and creativity for many of the retired ladies in our community, threw open its doors to new participants and then enjoyed an afternoon out, ending with a cream tea that included the spouses and partners of its members.

We partnered with our local community centre, which gave us a large hall free of charge so that we could host four sports and crafts events at bargain prices, enabling local families to afford to have something to enjoy together during the school holiday. More than 95 people benefited from these events.

Our Creative Arts team (CAFÉ, which stands for Creative Arts For Evangelism) work hard throughout the year, sharing the Good News at various community events, so our church leadership threw them an ice cream party to show their appreciation. An evening of relaxation, fun and laughter really gave the opportunity for friendships to grow. The team of 13 people are mainly teenagers and young adults who have not yet given their lives to God. We have found that this ministry gives us opportunities to share the Gospel where doors might be closed to traditional methods of sharing it; and, as we choreograph routines week after week, the message of God's love and salvation is communicated to the team, mainly through song.

The week ended with two events. Messy Church tackled the topic of unhealthy rivalry and jealousy, which often destroy communities. The story of Joseph, along with discussion, parachutes, inflatables, a create-a-coat competition and 'put Joseph in the well' team games, gave families the chance to learn practical hints and tips to stop these unhealthy emotions from becoming a problem. Finally, the weather stayed good, which helped local families to socialise as they hunted for 37 decorated pebbles.

Other opportunities to be a community and engage with and help our community since the start of the year have included car treasure hunts, guided walks, meals out, cleaning teams, and gifting food and emergency supplies to the vulnerable and struggling in our town.

ROSEMARY LETHBRIDGE

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An afternoon by the pool

Caleb Barratt-Peacock (11) was very excited on the morning of Sabbath 11 September 2021, as the day of his baptism had finally arrived! It had originally been arranged for 21 March 2020, the day our churches shut their doors due to COVID-19, so Caleb had a very long wait for a new date.

Loughborough Church does not have a building or a baptistry, so the baptism took place in a pool in the garden. Caleb was baptised by Pastor John Ferguson, with Loughborough's pastor, Jonathan Holder, sending a personal message and joining us online from America, where he was studying. The weather was kind to us, and church members, friends, family members and neighbours enjoyed an afternoon in the sunshine. Others who could not be with us in person due to COVID-19 limiting the numbers joined online – the furthest being from Australia! One benefit of the pandemic has been the ability to worship with others who are separated from us geographically. Due to the outdoor setting



Just one

'Royal Society of Chemistry report says racism "pervasive"' was the title of an article by the BBC's science correspondent, Pallab Ghosh, recently posted on the BBC News website. The article highlighted the fact that of the 575 chemistry professors in the UK, just one is black. That one is Nottingham Central Church's very own first elder, Robert Mokaya.



Ghosh interviewed Robert, who has been a professor of chemistry at Nottingham University for 15 years, during which time he has had all his applications for funding for research projects turned down by Britain's main funding body. 'This is not typical for a professor,' confirmed Robert, 'and it has been very, very difficult.' He has, however, been able to conduct research with funding provided by charities and societies such as the Royal Society.

Robert's excellent work in the field of chemistry was rewarded earlier this year when he was awarded an OBE.

Black and ethnic minority groups have been and continue to be undermined by the very organisations that represent them, and it takes faith to keep on going, but we still have God, and He doesn't discriminate. You cannot keep a good man down!

Robert and his wife Edna, a Pathfinders leader and director, are a blessing and encouragement in this difficult time of tackling racism.

To read the whole article, visit:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-60708712>

DENNIS TAYLOR & PASTOR CURTIS MURPHY



we were finally able to sing, something we had missed greatly during the long period of church closure.

Caleb had invited a number of his school friends, some of whom came in person and some of whom watched online with their families. Caleb enjoys spending time with our neighbours, most of whom are elderly, as we live on a road of bungalows. For some of our neighbours who came to celebrate with Caleb, the service was very moving, reminding them of long-forgotten church experiences from their youth. We pray that God will continue to work on their hearts and show us how best to share His love with them in the weeks and months to come. It is our hope that the pool will see many more choosing to be baptised in future years.

Caleb is clear that he wants to continue to serve God all of his life. His favourite Bible verses are from Jude, and we pray that as Caleb continues his journey he will do as the words of Jude 20, 21 say (NIV): 'But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.'

VIVIENNE BARRATT-PEACOCK

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Fake ID

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

Whether you are getting on a plane, buying kitchen knives or other age-restricted products, or arranging a mortgage, for various reasons we are likely to be asked, 'Could I see some identification, please?' And what do we produce upon this request? An ID card, driver's licence, passport – really, anything that fulfils the enquirer's need to verify a detail about us. Our 'proof' is likely to have our picture, name and age on it, and sometimes it needs to have our address too.

But is that the sum of who you are – a name, date of birth, residence, a photo? They're just some facts of who you are, but what about the real you?

You don't have to go far to encounter matters of sexual identity. I don't intend to explore this subject as such, but there is discussion, even debate and contention, about one's gender and/or sexuality – but is this your identity, or just a detail about you, whether biological or physiological?

In his book, *Wake Up*, Piers Morgan (I'm not one of his groupies, but this book does provoke some matters to ponder on) questions the absurdity of a school saying that their girls can choose not only whether they wear trousers or a skirt, but which gender they identify with. The absurdity is not the choice debate, but the fact that this is an all-girls school! Even when challenged about their gender policy, the school governors still insisted that this was a girls' school and retained 'Girls' School' in the name.

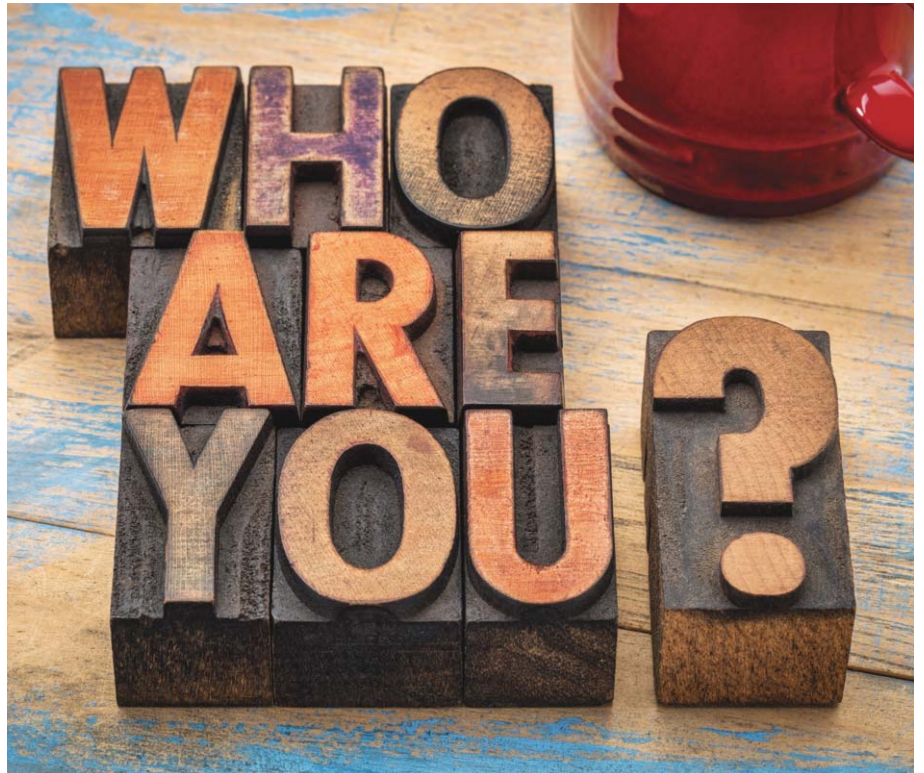
We are presented with television programmes following celebrity genealogies (*Who Do You Think You Are?*) and helping individuals find their family after adoption or being a foundling (*Long Lost Family*). It's clear from these programmes how important it is for people to know who they are connected to, and that there are people like them.

Personality and character are things we don't usually have depicted on our form of identification, but they do define who we are, as do behaviour and opinions.

If our identity is determined by the simple facts of a picture, name, date of birth, address and so on, these can be faked. From spy films to fraud crimes, fake identification has been the key in achieving a goal or outcome . . . but if the imposters are found out, there is nothing but trouble.

So I ponder on the possibility that someone might falsely claim to have their identity in Christ. Paul, in his own handwriting, told the believers in Galatia: 'What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation' (Galatians 6:15b).

After this 'new creation' statement, Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, referencing the glory of God radiating from Moses' face after being in the presence of God (2 Corinthians 3:7). Moses had to cover his face for a while due to the radiant glory from his encounter with God, and the veil represents the hardness of minds of unbelievers, removed only by believing in Christ (verse 14). It is through turning to the Lord that the veil is taken away (verse 16), 'so all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord' (verse 18). A change takes place when we first believe in Christ, which is fulfilled in completion at His return.



You have a new identity when you believe in Jesus Christ: 'But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God' (John 1:12). I read an article recently which referenced prefixes before the claim of being a Christian: 'Adventist Christian', 'LGBT+ Christian', and so on. The author challenged the use of any prefix, suggesting it takes away the sole focus of Christ in our identity.

We can be defined, listed, categorised in all kinds of ways, but is this really our identity? Some things we cannot change: I can't change my birth date. But I can change who I identify with; and, for that change to be true, I need the change in my life that only the Holy Spirit can achieve. I changed my identity from self to my Saviour when I chose to believe, and He changes me in my journey towards His completion of making all things new after His return. But I ponder whether it's possible, after getting my new identity, for it actually to be a fake ID?

All scripture references in this article have been drawn from the New Living Translation.

Ancient words: 'want'

Many years ago, when I was a little less wise and much less tactful, a visiting speaker came to York. His sermon seemed to go on for much longer than a young teenage boy could handle, and then finally it was over and we sang the last hymn, 'Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah', which contains the line, 'Feed me till I want no more.' May God forgive me, but I remember saying very loudly in the foyer as we all exited that the preacher certainly had fed us till we wanted no more! Years later, I now deeply regret it, as the pastor is such a lovely Christian gentleman.

The word 'want' in this hymn originally had the meaning not of desire, but of need; when we sing the hymn, we shouldn't think it means, 'Feed me till I wish for no more,' but rather, 'Feed me till I no longer lack anything.' May this knowledge give you a fresh appreciation of the author's meaning in this beautiful hymn!

Next week we'll be looking at how the word 'without' has changed over time.

ANDREW PUCKERING



by Sharon Platt-McDonald

Are you well?

Part 2 – Physical symptoms

Casey¹ had been feeling unwell for some time. She had difficulties sleeping, her appetite was reduced, and she was experiencing extreme fatigue. Casey put it down to the mounting stress she was undergoing at work. However, the turning point came when she realised that almost every week a new symptom would emerge. She sought medical advice, and subsequent investigations revealed a serious underlying condition for which she is now having treatment.

When should you seek medical attention?

Whom to contact

Obviously, your local GP or clinic would be the first stop. However, when your GP surgery is closed, or you are too unwell to wait for it to re-open, help and support can be accessed via the GP out-of-hours service. This is available through a free phone call to 111.

The NHS 111 Symptom Checker² is also a helpful resource to access if you are not sure about your condition or how serious it might be. It does the following:

- Answers questions about your main symptoms;
- Helps you find out when and where to get help;
- Arranges for you to be contacted by a nurse if required.

Emergency signs

If you are unsure when immediate medical attention is necessary, the Centre for Disease Control³ highlights the following for determining what is an emergency which needs urgent intervention:

Children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or grey skin colour
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting

- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Caring for others

West Hampshire NHS Trust lists the following signs that someone you are caring for is deteriorating:⁴

- Change in consciousness/awareness – increased anxiety, confusion or restlessness;
- Change in heart rate and circulation – changes in heart/pulse rate, dizziness, feeling faint, chest pain, sweating;
- Change in breathing – different sound, increased effort, flaring nostrils;
- Temperature changes – high (above 37.5°C) or low (35°C or below), chills or shivering;
- Skin colour change – mottling, rash, pallor, blueish tinge to lips;
- Bowel changes – diarrhoea or vomiting, distended abdomen;
- Change in urine output – change in quantity, colour or smell of urine;
- Increased pain, or change in appearance or behaviour.

Always act promptly.

Good health!

¹Not her real name

²<https://usetheightservice.com/self-care/nhs-symptom-checker/>

³<https://www.emergencyfirstresponse.com/knowning-see-medical-attention/>

⁴<https://gp-portal.westhampshireccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/recognising-deterioration-in-PWLD-poster-FINAL.pdf>

International news

- **A Bible miraculously survived a devastating fire in Norway** on 5 December last year, write David Neal and Vanesa Pizzuto of *TED News*. The Bible belonged to Valentina Melentjeva, who works at the Fredheim Lifestyle Centre in Kongsberg, Norway. Although her apartment, which belongs to the lifestyle centre, was completely destroyed, thanks be to God that no one was hurt – and neither was the Bible! When her son walked through the charred ruins of the apartment he found the Bible intact on a shelf, surrounded by other books which had all been burnt. Read the full story, including how Valentina was given the Bible, at ted.adventist.org/news/bible-survives-devastating-fire/?idU=1.
- **Here are some more updates from our churches in Ukraine**, which were first posted on the Norwegian Union Conference website. According to Stanislav Nosov, the Ukrainian Union Conference President, the church has been a blessing to many, although potentially more than 30% of church members in Ukraine (13,000) may be displaced or refugees. 'We know of two sisters from Mariupol who came out of their basement to look for water and tragically died in a bombing,' say church leaders. Where there are no hostilities people are 'managing very well', but in occupied areas 'church members are running out of food, water, and access to heating'. Some church buildings have been destroyed, but others are serving as shelters for the homeless. Nosov says that 'pastors and leaders are helping to evacuate people from areas of fighting. They provide shelter, medicines, food, information and prayer support.' Internally displaced people are receiving hygiene products,

food, water, clothing and medicine. The intact churches are still holding services, and attendance is higher than before the war as people turn to God, leading to baptisms.

- **A pastor in Ukraine was saved by God when a bomb hit the church he was in**, says Maksym Krupskyi of the Ukrainian Union Conference, quoted in a report in *TED News*. Pastor Mychaylo Prodanyk, from Chernihiv, was in the church with his family at the time, but by the grace of God emerged unscathed. After the bombing he went right back again, risking his life to help others.
- **The Ukrainian Adventist Centre of Higher Education has sustained minimal damage and is now closed**, with students and staff alike having been evacuated. The area has been under occupation and seen active hostilities. Further updates will follow soon.
- **A Russian-American congregation in the USA is embracing unity and community**, according to an article first posted on the Southern California Conference website. The church of almost 100 members has fifteen nationalities, including Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Georgian, Belarusian, and more. Services are in Russian, and the senior pastor, Anatoliy Gurduiala, is Ukrainian. In a recent sermon he reminded congregants that our citizenship is in heaven and that we must strive to love our enemies: 'That's what makes Christians different,' he said. Nationality doesn't matter in a church family – we are all God's children.

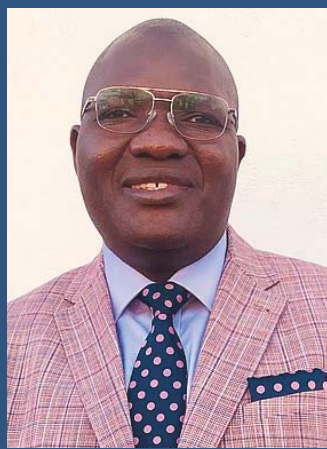
ANDREW PUCKERING

International News is a regular column for *MESSENGER* that provides a brief snapshot of developments from the rest of our church around the world.

New appointments in the South England Conference

The trustees of the South England Conference made two special appointments on Sunday 3 April this year, selecting Edith Samambwa and Dr Hezron Otieno Adingo to serve as that conference's health director and ministerial association secretary respectively.

Edith Samambwa has more than twenty-five years' experience as a healthcare professional in the public, private and charity sectors, including as Health Director for the Irish Mission. She holds a Master's degree in Public Health from University College Dublin, Ireland, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Zimbabwe. 'It will be my pleasure to serve in the South England Conference and to serve God and my church,' she says. 'I look forward to working with everyone.' She currently attends West Bletchley Church in Milton Keynes.



Hezron Adingo begins his new role with immediate effect, filling the position made vacant after Pastor Samuel Ouadjo was called to serve at the British Union Conference (BUC). Adingo comes to the role after serving as London Area 6C Coordinator and pastoring the Ilford Central and Highams Park churches and the Serenity church plant. He holds a PhD in Theological Studies (systematic theology) and a Master's degree in Bible Studies (New Testament) from Africa International University, Kenya, and a Bachelor of Theology degree from Bugema University, Uganda.

Responding to his new appointment, Adingo said, 'I count it a privilege. . . . With the support of my dear wife, Mary, and our two daughters, Laura and Casey, I look forward to supporting our pastors in their endeavour to achieve spiritual growth, personal development, professional growth, and the performance of their duty of proclaiming the good news of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and growing the churches assigned to them.'

Sheila Anne Skerrett (1932-2022)
d. 10 February.



Sheila was born in Taunton, Somerset, and had an older brother, John, and younger sister, Wendie. The family moved to Exeter when the children were still young.

Sheila left school at fourteen and worked for the Post Office as a telegraphist. One of her work colleagues was Gordon Skerrett, with whom she would be reacquainted in later life, but Sheila also met Derrick Allen, who worked for British Railways. In time, love blossomed between Sheila and Derrick, and they married on 5 March 1955. They were happy to have a daughter named Hilary and then a son named Nigel. Sheila mainly concentrated on being a wife and mother, but did have a few part-time jobs. She loved being around children, and enjoyed her job as a school dinner lady and helping with Brownies. Sheila and Derrick had five grandchildren and took an active part in their upbringing, often taking them for days out.

Sheila and Derrick were involved with the Exeter Recorded Concert Society, of which Derrick was a founding member. As a young woman Sheila participated in amateur operatic groups, and in retirement years she volunteered at 'Singing for the Brain'. Music was an essential part of her life.

Sheila's mother had been a Christian Scientist, and she had accompanied her to meetings, but Sheila eventually started attending a Baptist church and was baptised. She had a lovely soprano voice, and enjoyed singing solos and in a church choir. When Pastor Derek Marley conducted a campaign in Exeter in the autumn of 1984, Sheila and her husband attended. They became convicted of the message they were hearing and chose to join Exeter Seventh-day Adventist Church, where they became active members.

For many years, Sheila became a star collector for ADRA and would collect door-to-door for hours. She also enjoyed talking to the people she met, and witnessed about her faith in Jesus. She was well known in her neighbourhood. For some time she prepared a few breakfasts on Sabbath morning to distribute to homeless people on her way to church, as she had compassion for them. Sheila also valued Sabbath School and the study of the Bible. Her solos enhanced many workshops, as did her own poems. She loved animals, particularly her

Lord, help me to delegate

Forgive me, Lord, for failing to share responsibility:
For not including young people in our church services;
For not giving others the opportunity to lead.
Forgive me for thinking it more of a burden
To pick up the phone, or compose an email,
Or go and speak to someone,
Than trying to do it all myself.

Now I fully realise, Lord,
That my lack of organisational skills and planning
Have deprived others of experiencing responsibility
And the joy of serving You,
And have deprived Your congregation
Of the diversity and richness
Of the talents within our church.

Have any left the church, Lord,
Because I failed to involve them,
Or because I stamped my imprint
Too heavily upon Your praise?
Please help me to change, and to reach out:
To give others a chance;
To be more organised and more efficient.
Let me encourage others to step up, Lord,
So that our worship of You
Will be vibrant and colourful,
And multitudes will come to You
And join our company
As we blend our gifts together
In beautiful harmony,
Giving You all the glory –
For You are worthy,
Our holy and majestic Creator,
Our Saviour and our God.

ANONYMOUS

Meet it by Dennis Johnson

When you face a problem or a challenge or a test,
Have you found the only way that works and is the best?
I'll tell you one that is designed for every test you meet:
Meet it on your knees, and never on your feet!
Trying in your own strength may be brave but bring defeat:
Meet it on your knees, and never on your feet.
So if you want relief that feels total and complete,
Meet life's tests and trials on your knees, not on your feet.

2022 WM Session Notification

Notice is hereby given that the triennial session of the Welsh Mission of Seventh-day Adventists will take place at Cardiff Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sunday 26 June 2022. Delegates will receive documentation in advance of the session.

PASTOR JACQUES VENTER
(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, WELSH MISSION)



cats. Her poems reflected her love of God's creation, and her favourite hymn was 'How Great Thou Art', which she sang many times as a solo.

After forty-six years of marriage, Derrick unexpectedly died of a haemorrhagic stroke on a day they were due to go on holiday. This was a great shock for Sheila, who missed him a great deal. A few years later, she moved to a home in the Alphington area of Exeter and started attending lunches at the Alphington church. It was here that she became reacquainted with a widower, Gordon Skerrett. They became friends, and married in November 2013. Very sadly, the following year, her son Nigel died of a brain aneurysm, which caused her a lot of heartache.

During her short marriage to Gordon, they had several lovely holidays together in Italy, where they met new friends. Sadly, Gordon became ill and had to live in a care home for a while before he died in 2020.

Sheila was later diagnosed with oesophageal cancer, and she also had glaucoma, which resulted in severe deterioration of her vision. She became frail, and lived in a care home for the last month of her life. Her faith was always strong, and she knew that Jesus would return one day to call her home. On 10 February she fell asleep in Jesus.

Her funeral on 2 March was conducted by Pastor Florin Orasanu at the Exeter Crematorium. Her grandson, Frankie, read one of her poems about the birds in her garden, and her granddaughter, Lisa, spoke warmly about her grandmother. A rendition of 'How Great Thou Art' was played to remind the congregation of the words which meant so much to Sheila.

Pastor Orasanu read the eulogy thoughtfully, which had been prepared by Hilary Jordan, Sheila's daughter. He also gave a short spiritual talk, and spoke of two words which Sheila had left on a card for her family. Those words

were: 'Be there.' Underneath was written the Bible text 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, comforting words which Sheila so firmly believed.

Exeter members will miss Sheila, who has been a faithful member for so many years, but they know that they will see her again on that great resurrection morning.

STELLA JEFFERY

Frank Hugh Blewitt (1935-2020) d. 2 April.



Frank was a member of Stanborough Park Church for about half a century, attending church regularly until poor health forced him into a care home, where he caught COVID-19 at the beginning of the first lockdown. He passed away peacefully after a mercifully short illness, becoming the church's first victim of the disease.

Frank was born in Allahabad in the Uttar Pradesh area of India on 29 January 1935, and was sent to live with his half-sister in London in 1954, as it was becoming increasingly hard for non-Indians to find work. Finding the call-up for National Service imminent, Frank decided to join the army while he was able to choose the type of work and training that suited his interests, rather than be conscripted to whatever unit was decided for him. He joined REME in 1955, where he found himself working on secret weapons.

He spent three and a half years in Singapore, and upon returning to England was invited by a family friend to attend meetings at the New Gallery Centre in London's West End, where he gave his heart to the Lord and was baptised in 1960.

Frank now faced a dilemma: not only was he now convicted about the Sabbath, but also his conscience meant that he felt unable to continue working on weapons. He respectfully requested Sabbath privileges and that he might no longer work on weapons, as, in this case, the nature of his work was such that it was felt that he

could not be transferred to another unit. This led to his being court-martialled and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. (He had been offered the chance to buy himself out, but was unable to afford it, and also felt that he would be setting a precedent.) After two months he appealed to a civil tribunal and was released from the army on grounds of conscience. A written army record described his conduct in the service as 'exemplary'.

It was at the New Gallery that he met Ruth, who was working there as a Bible instructor. They married in 1961, and lived in London until 1962, when they moved to Bushey, near Watford. Ruth recalls the evenings he spent studying in their small caravan home – with a small child too – to obtain his A Levels in Pure and Applied Mathematics before going on to study for his HND qualification.

Frank subsequently entered the computer industry, working as a computer programmer and systems analyst. He was responsible for the computerisation of the railway signalling system, including West Drayton and Rotterdam (Netherlands). Aged 50, he decided on a change of direction and took up teaching, serving at John Loughborough School and then Stanborough Secondary School, where he taught computer science and mathematics to A Level students, retiring in 2000.

Frank was very active in church service. On arrival in Bushey, he and Ruth attended Watford Town Church, where he served as an elder and PR secretary. After transferring to Stanborough Park Church he soon found his skills in demand in the PR Department, often as leader, achieving hundreds of column inches of photos and reports, as well as taking and developing his own prints in those pre-digital days. His name appeared regularly at the foot of articles in the MESSENGER. At various times he also served as a Sabbath School superintendent and a lay preacher, and was a regular

senior Sabbath School teacher.

Frank died on 2 April 2020. He leaves a wife, Ruth; daughters, Paula and Dawn; and grandchildren, Adam and Lauren. His funeral was conducted by Pastor Patrick Boyle, under the severe restrictions that existed at the beginning of the first lockdown, at the Chilterns Crematorium in Amersham, and was attended by just a small number of close family members. However, the service benefited from a livestream broadcast, enabling mourners from as far away as Australia to join the service remotely.

RUTH BLEWITT & JUNE COOMBS

Messenger

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Notification of death

Rachel Norma Surridge, mother of British Union Conference Executive Secretary Pastor John Surridge, and widow of former North England Conference president Pastor Ron Surridge, fell asleep on 6 April this year. She was, among other things, a dearly loved teacher at several of our Seventh-day Adventist schools before enjoying nearly three decades of active retirement with her beloved Ron. A full obituary will follow in a future issue of this magazine.

BASED ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE BUC COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Pastor Jack Sequeira entered his rest on 26 March 2022 after a lifetime of service, having trained colporteurs, directed Adventist education and missionary volunteers, and served as a district pastor in many parts of the world. He is survived by his wife, Jean; his daughter, Jenny; his son, Chris, and daughter-in-law Nnette; and their children. A complete obituary will follow at a later date.

BASED ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE BUC COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Sunset

Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by HM Nautical Almanac Office.

	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Apr 29	8.21	8.33	8.29	8.48	8.54
May 6	8.32	8.44	8.41	9.02	9.07
13	8.43	8.55	8.53	9.15	9.19
20	8.53	9.05	9.04	9.28	9.31
27	9.03	9.15	9.14	9.40	9.42

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